

Pfal. CXLIV. Ver. xii.

*That our Sons may be as Plants grown up
in their Youth; that our Daughters
may be as Corner Stones polished after
the Similitude of a Palace.*

Or as we read in our Daily Service.

*That our Sons may grow up as the young
Plants; and that our Daughters may
be as the polished Corners of the Temple.*

THESE Words, or good Wishes,
can no sooner be recited at this
Time and in this Place; but that
you your selves do point out the
immediate Application of them. And indeed I
had rather directly apply them, than stay with
unnecessary Labour to expound them. It is
sufficient, and I thank God not improper to our
present Circumstances, to observe, that King
David had been lately bless'd with eminent
Success and Victories abroad, and was now
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praying God to crown them with Peace and Prosperity at home. He begins the *Psalm* like a Song of Triumph over his Enemies; and ends it with a Supplication of Happiness to his own People. *Ver. 1, 2. Blessed be the Lord my Strength, who teacheth my Hands to war, and my Fingers to fight. My Hope and my Fortress, my Castle and Deliverer, my Defender in whom I trust; who subdueth my People that is under me. And so on, with the highest Expressions of Gratitude and Exultation. He breaks off the Rapture, and with devout Eloquence begins again, Ver. 9. I will sing a new Song unto thee, O God, and sing Praises unto thee with a ten stringed Lute. Thou hast given Victory unto Kings, &c. Then the Royal Conquerour becomes a humble Petitioner to the King of Kings, that he would please to crown his Foreign Conquests with domestick Peace and Plenty, and all Manner of Felicity. The Foundation of all which was to be their Youth well educated, their Sons and Daughters virtuously and religiously brought up; for such is the Blessing implored in the Text, That our Sons may grow up as the young Plants, and that our Daughters may be as the polished Corners of the Temple. Or, as Corner Stones polished after the Similitude of a Palace. There is no great Difference in the Translations, and possibly the old one is fit to be retained, the Temple rather than the Palace, if as*
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the best Interpreters understand it, by the *Polished Corners* the Psalmist does mean those *Pillars* which supported the *Veil* of Cherubims, mentioned *Exodus* xxvi. 31, 32. which were polished or overlaid with *Gold*, and did divide the *Holy of Holies* from the *Body* of the *Tabernacle* or *Temple*.

But this is certain, that in either Sense, the Psalmist meant to represent Children improv'd by Education under a Figure of *Grace* and *Beauty*, the natural *Grace* of thriving *Plants*, and the artificial *Beauty* of some glorious *Building*. Why our *Sons* are compared to the *Young Plants*, as if Nature were stronger and more self sufficient in them? and why our *Daughters* to *polished Corners*, as if they wanted a more exquisite Art and Skill to improve and adorn them? This probably was never meant, and there should be no indulging of Fancy in interpreting the Word of God.

The Words without any straining, do contain this Proposition.

“ Our Children shining in their Native Sweetness, and especially adorn'd with a liberal Education, do make a very good and glorious Show: Nothing more comfortable to behold, than our *Sons* thus growing up as the young *Plants*, and our *Daughters* thus appearing as the *polished Corners* of a *Palace* or a *Temple*.

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In this World, the Theatre of God, there is a strange Variety of delightful Objects, that strike our Eyes with agreeable and even amazing Joy and Pleasure. And well may we Creatures behold and wonder, when these Things pleas'd the Creator's own Review: He *saw* his new born Works, and they all were good. But now among all the delectable Sights that can fill the Eyes of Men; I believe none is more entertaining, more ravishing, than what we have now *before* us and *around* us. A dear and pretious Sight! Some Thousands of poor Children, arm'd with their own Innocence, adorn'd with your Charity, and above all, illustrated with the first Rudiments of Learning, Virtue and Religion! What Spectacle upon Earth can come nearer to that of a *Multitude of the Heavenly Host*? What more lively Resemblance here below of that glorious Appearance revealed to St. John, of the many Thousands with their Father's Name written in their Foreheads, singing as it were a new Song before the Throne, not defiled, for they are Virgins, following the Lamb, redeemed from among Men, being the first Fruits unto God and the Lamb. A Congregation of these innocent ones is a goodly Sight to look, to feed, to dwell upon! A Sight that is enough to open the Eyes of Prejudice, and to strike Envy dumb! A Sight so endearing, at least so inoffensive,

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that disdain and ill Nature cannot blame it, can at worst but overlook it!

And indeed in the Prospect of all Things under the Sun, the Wisdom of God has so adapted our Eyes to visible Things; that the *youngest* Creatures seem to have the most winning Beauty in them. The Lambs, the Kids, the *young ones* of every living Kind, have the Sweetness, the Prettiness in them, that please and charm far beyond what they do, when they grow up to Age, and (what we improperly call) Perfection. This holds in the very inanimate Products of Nature; the Bud and the opening Blossom have a singular Freshness in them, that on that Account delight us more, than the full blown Flower or the riper Fruits. This joyful Spring does exceed in Glory the maturer Seasons that are following after. The *young Plants* in the Text are a better Figure of Decency, than when they come to spread into Boughs and Shade. Nay, it is in some Measure the same with the Works of *Art*, as with those of Nature: the first Draught and ruder Model do sometime hit us more than the perfect Operation; and the rising Structure does promise a Pleasure perhaps greater than we find in the finisht Building. There is a Reason for it, that the Beginnings of things are apt to raise our Imagination and our Hopes; when the Close
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and Period of them do seldom answer that great Image which we had formed in our Minds.

But I keep rather to the Instance here before us: These early Shoots of Mankind, these young and tender Plants now before our Eyes, must needs shed a sensible Pleasure upon all good Christians. And therefore I cannot but commend the Prudence of the Governours and Trustees of this Charity; that they keep up an Anniversary Meeting of these poor Children, to come from every Quarter of our two Cities and their larger Suburbs, to walk in decent Couples thro' the Streets, led by the Ministers, the Pastors, as the *Lambs* of their Flock, and here at last folded as it were in the Courts of God's House: To see them cloath'd with Neatness, and set off with good Manners, and by Humility and Piety made all *glorious within*; to hear them reading the Psalms distinctly, making the Responses audibly, turning readily to the Chapters, reciting most perfectly their Catechism and some useful Exposition of it; and singing forth the Psalms and Hymns in a melodious Manner. O what a Christian Entertainment is this! A Spectacle far beyond the Vanities of the Stage or Musick House, or any worldly Pomp whatever!

The *Papists*, whose Religion does consist much in Pageantry and Show, do make their solemn Processions in a various Order: but they

they have no Device so taking to the People, as that of young Children winged like *Angels*, and as it were flying along with *Hallelujahs* and *Hosannahs* in the Streets. Our plain Religion admits of no such ludicrous Pomp. The humble and unaffected Sight, that is this Day represented to you, does (I dare say) excel all those glaring Amusements of Popery. The Children are here shewn like themselves, in their own Simplicity, like pure and native *Lilies*, which for that reason could outshine *Solomon* in all his Glory. We have wisely rejected the Superstition of our Fathers, who dress'd up their Children for a Mock Procession upon the Festivals of *St. Nicholas*, *St. Catherine*, *St. Clement*, the *Holy Innocents*, and such like Days. Our Charity-Children are taught to make no other Appearance, but that of Sincerity and Truth. In some of our Schools, you may see them on a *Sunday Evening* at their Quarterly Exercises of Letters and Religion, in a most edifying Manner. Some of them are spelling the hardest Words with more Exactness than many adult Persons can do, who yet think themselves Masters of the *English* Tongue. Some are reading with such an Emphasis and clear Pronunciation, as may instruct; if not shame, those Men and Women who come to hear them. Others are making Speeches, or holding Dialogues, or by

Turns rehearsing some chosen Parts of Scripture, or likewise reciting some particular Clauses in the Acts of Parliament restraining Vice and Immorality. And all with such an Air of Christian Breeding, that, I perceive, gives a wonderful Satisfaction to those Friends and Neighbours who so well spend the Evening of a Christian Sabbath. The solemn Service of the Church does not here admit such a full Trial of their Abilities; and yet they make a sufficient Proof even in these our publick Assemblies; to which they are constantly brought, and in which they learn to behave themselves with Awe and Reverence, under the Eyes of their Governours, and as in the Sight of God; Praying, Reading, Singing, Responding in so good an Order; that in many of our Churches, these Charity Children are a considerable Part, I had almost said, the worthiest Part of our Congregation; an Example to many of grey Hairs.

This goodly Appearance of the Children in our Churches has often raised up Benefactors to them. The Auditors have been so delighted with their good Performance, that they have gone home with Admiration, they have reflected upon it with a fresh Comfort; and so God has stirred up their Hearts to bestow some considerable Gift or Legacy upon them. I could
give:

give some Instances, and I hope to live (if it please God) to see many more. Who knows, but this Day, and this present Assembly, may afford an *Example* or two of some able and well disposed People, who may be so well satisfied with these Demonstrations of Innocence and Charity, that their Hearts may burn within them; and they may make a Vow unto God, to dedicate some Part of their Substance, living or dying, to this best of Works, The Education of poor Children.

My Brethren, There is an innate Force in some Objects of Pity and Compassion, that does attract our Eyes and very Hearts towards 'em. This attractive Force and Virtue is in no other deplorable Creatures, so much as it is in poor distressed Children; like the Needle to the Loadstone, we cannot but turn and point directly to them. Harmless as Lambs and Doves, they have no Arts in begging; they have no dissembled Tokens of Misery to impose upon us; they have no affected Clamours to overbear us; they have nothing but the Merit of a real Want, and a Patience to be reliev'd.

Let me put you in Mind, that by the Account of Bede, our oldest Historian of any Credit, the Conversion of our Saxon Ancestors was in great Measure owing to this sensible Cause; I mean, to the charming Sight of poor English Children.

*Eccles. Hist.
Lib. II.
Cap. I.*

For he tells us, that *Gregory* the Great, before his Advancement to the See of *Rome*, happened to spy some Boys of this Country exposed in the Market among other Captives to sale: and upon enquiry understanding they were Pagans, he sigh'd to think, that the Prince of Darkness should possess such clear and bright Souls; and that Bodies of such a fair outward Aspect should have Minds void of all inward Grace and Goodness: And then alluding to the Similitude of those our *Angles* and the *Angels* above, and other Words of Affinity in Sound, the Wit of that Age; He took up a Resolution of sending Missionaries to convert the *English* Nation; which was soon after accomplish'd under *Austin*. If this were a *Monkish* Fable, it would however bear this Moral in it, That the very Sight of hopeful and destitute Children, must needs raise our Pity and Concern for their Souls; and dispose us to help bring them out of Darkness unto the Light of Knowledge and Salvation.

And let this suffice for our first Observation from the Text, that "Our Children shining
 "in their native Beauty, and especially adorn'd
 "with a liberal Education, do make a very
 "good and glorious Show: Nothing more comfortable to behold, than our Sons thus growing up as the young Plants, and our Daughters
 "thus

“ thus appearing as the *polished Corners* of a Pa-
 “ lace or a Temple.

II. I should proceed in the second Place to recommend some of the “ *Benefits and Advan-*
 “ *tages* of thus providing for the better Educa-
 “ *tion* of Children; which must be implied in
 “ this affectionate Wish, or rather this impor-
 “ *tunate Prayer* of King David, that our Sons
may grow up as the young Plants, and that our Daugh-
ters may be as the polished Corners of the Temple.

And here, to avoid the confounding a Multi-
 plicity of Blessings, I shall speak briefly of those
 Benefits or Blessings in Respect of Children
 themselves; and then in respect of Families, Pa-
 rishes, and Kingdoms.

First, In Respect of Children themselves: How
is Man born but like a wild Ass's Colt? And Job XI. 12.
what is it, that is bound up in the Heart of every
Child, but such a Ferity and Foolishness that
must be fetch'd out by Instruction and Cor-
rection? For this excellent Purpose, It is good Prov. XXII.
for a Man that he bear the Yoke from his Youth; and 15.
that he be trained up from a Child in the Way that
he should go, that when he is old, he may not de-
part from it.

Youth is the Seed-Time of good Principles
 and good Conversation; if this Season be alto-
 gether lost, the good Soil must become barren,
 or be curst with Thorns and Thistles. The

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first Rudiments of Letters are hardly attainable but in Childhood; when People grow up in Ignorance of 'em, not one of a thousand can recover the lost Opportunity. However acute in other Matters, they are dull at this; as if Providence would chastise Mankind for offering to change the appointed Seasons of Learning, with the same Kind of Justice, by which Men are left Reprobates, who dare to trust to a late Repentance.

Therefore the Parts and Capacity of every Man or Woman, do in great Measure depend upon an early Education bestow'd upon them. There may be a rare Instance of one or two in an Age, who shall emerge from the Difficulties of an ignorant and mispent Youth: and even those few shall be continually complaining of that Misfortune, and shall be casting the Reproach of it upon their careless Parents, or other Friends unmindful of them. I cannot say, that all Souls are at first equal in Activity and Power; there may be finer or Courser Threads of Life from the very Birth and natural Constitution: But certainly, a greater Difference does afterward arise from the good or ill Management of Infant Souls: The Inclination to Heaviness and Dulness, may, for want of Refinement, settle into perfect Dross and dead Matter; and even a Quickness of natural Parts,

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left naked in the Hands of the World and the Devil, may have but a sharper Edge to Vice and Folly.

You therefore, little Children, who are born of meaner Parents, rejoice in this, that God provides you Friends better than your Parents, Charitable Friends, who cloth your Bodies, and new dress your Minds and Souls; who timely remove you, *O young Plants*, into the best Nurseries of Learning and Religion, to be there watered by your Teachers, till God shall give you a full *Encrease*. If ye want Judgment now, to prize this Blessing, yet, within the first Years of your Discretion, ye will congratulate your selves, and bless God, and praise your Benefactors for it. You will come to say, Oh what had we been, if left unto our selves, and to our Parents unable to help us! Left to play in the Streets, and to linger and pilfer from Door to Door! What had we been, when come to Age, but the lowest Servants, and hardest Labourers; or perhaps idle Wanderers and Beggars, or possibly strouling Thieves and Robbers! But we adore the Mercy of God, that when as to any schooling or breeding, our *Father* and *Mother* had forsaken us, then did God take us up, and commit us to the Care of many good and generous Christians, who maintained us at their *Charity-Schools*, till we were fitter for the World, and

and can now live comfortably and creditably in it. We praise the Lord, and can never forget this Benefit bestow'd upon us.

H. But Secondly, this good Education of Children is a mighty Blessing in Respect of the Families to which they belong.

I might here lead you into a Connexion of many Truths; *As First*, That it is the Ambition and Glory of honourable Marriage, to be bless'd with Children and the Fruit of the Womb; and yet that Blessing does not depend on the Birth, so much as on the good Breeding of them. *And Secondly*, It is the natural Inclination of all Parents to love their Children; which Love can be express'd no better Way, than by a tender Regard to their virtuous Education. *And Thirdly*, It is a laudable Kind of Instinct in all Parents, to provide and lay up for their Children; and yet to bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord, is the best Portion, the truest Provision they can make for them. *Again, Fourthly*, It is the Hope and the Zeal of all Parents, that their Children may continue and preserve their Name, and carry it down to Posterity in some Credit and Reputation; which cannot well be expected without a right Foundation laid in the good Government and Improvement of those Children. *And I might, lastly*, observe, that the Peace and

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Quiet of all Families does so much depend upon the good Discipline of Children, and upon reforming the Humours and natural Infirmities of 'em; and above all, the Satisfaction of Parents, is so very sweet in seeing their Children do well in the World; and on the contrary, their Grief and Vexation are so very piercing at their Mis-carriage in it; that it must needs be the principal Interest as well as Duty of all Families to have the Children within them carefully brought up to Letters, Manners, and Conscience, that shall be all useful and good. These Things I can only hint, and recommend to your second Thoughts at some other serious Time.

My Eye and Heart are upon the *poor Children*, and I am satisfied that their good Education is a singular Benefit to the meaner Families and Friends they belong unto. Not only, that it is a sensible Ease and Pleasure to the indigent Parents, that the Burden of a Son or Daughter is taken off their Hands, by Cloaths and Schooling providentially given to 'em; but on many other Accounts. The Parents can more easily command their Children, when they come back from School accustomed to Awe, and Reverence, and dutiful Subjection. And they can trust them upon any Errand, or in any Place, when their Church Principle and their Practice at School has been, to keep their

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Hands from picking and stealing, and their Tongues from lying and all evil speaking. The Parents have some Comfort in these sanctified *little ones*, to hear them pray, and read, and rehearse, and sing; why, it turns their poor Cottage into a Sort of *Temple*, and in the happy Reform of their own Children, they do as it were receive *Angels unawares*. By this Means, to my Knowledge, some Parents have been regenerated and born a-new by the Influence of their own Flesh and Blood. To see their Children between the School-Hours, delighting in their Books and Lessons, at home; This by Degrees has turn'd the Hearts of the Parents the same Way; They have recovered their lost Reading, and have been restor'd to the Knowledge and Practice of Morality and Religion. I have heard of some poor Families, almost Heathenish, and without God in the World, where the profane Parents being pleas'd and overcome with the sweet Devotions of their Children, have themselves learned to serve God in their Houses by daily Prayer: So great Strength has God ordained out of the Mouths as it were of *Babes and Sucklings*. Nay, and the Parents who thus receive a spiritual Blessing from their Children, may likewise partake of many temporal Comforts from 'em: To see them transplanted in order from the Charity-Schools into fo-

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ber Families, and put out to convenient Trades and Callings; This must be a new Joy to the insufficient Parents; who could not so well dispose of 'em; and they are already supported with the Hopes of what they may live to enjoy: A help and Allowance from those their Children, as soon as they thrive and prosper in the World.

III. *Thirdly*, The Advantage of Childrens Education is very great, in Respect of those *Parishes* wherein they are born and bred.

It is a wise and happy Frame of political Constitution, that our Kingdom is divided into Parochial Bounds and Districts; as a large Body into Members, where every Part must adorn and defend the whole. These Parishes have their Peace and Welfare very much depending on the Behaviour of younger Persons. The greatest Disorders in any Neighbourhood do most commonly proceed from the Folly of Children, or the Rashness of Apprentices and Servants, and the like greener Heads. It is *their* Quarrels taken up by those who should be wiser, that most frequently create the Strife and the Variance in this City. Wherefore if all this young Brood were trained up in a strict Fear of God, and a humble Deference to their Superiours; It would very much tend to keeping the Peace and promoting the Prosperity of

every common Place of Habitation. Especially as to meaner Families, the Children of the Poor are too naturally the Nuisance of our Streets: They must be so, if suffered to be idle, and ignorant, and vicious: They must be Vermine, preying upon nobler Creatures. And how shall we prevent it? The Laws indeed reasonably enforce each Parish to maintain their own Poor, but this Maintenance is extended chiefly to the old and decay'd People; the *Children* are often thrown upon the wider World; or if there be Law sufficient for their Bodies, and to keep them from starving, yet there is no ordinary legal Provision for their Minds and Souls: That better Part of 'em is still exposed to be found brutish, and in a manner void of Understanding. The happier Use and Benefit of our *Charity-Schools*, where this Defect is so honourably supplied; where our voluntary Contributions do fill up the Measures that must of Necessity fall short in our stated Rates and Taxes. What Mischiefs would otherwise threaten and unavoidably fall upon every populous Parish? The poor ragged Children would swarm like Locusts in our Streets, and by playing about with Lies, and Oaths, and filthy Language in their Mouths, they would corrupt the Children of the better Sort; and by an early Entrance upon pilfering and sharpening, they

they would grow up into a Habit of profess'd Stealing, in all the Mysterries of it, from picking of Pockets, to Shop-Lifting and House-Breaking; wherein their Practice no doubt would lie most in those Streets, and at those Doors and Windows, with which they have been acquainted from their Childhood. Or if in Spite of Temptations, such ignorant Children should happen to be honestly dispos'd, yet at best, they would sink into a lazy and loitering Kind of Life; and at last, by a numerous Offspring, or by Sickness, or at farthest by old Age, they would become a Burden to the Parish; and so every Generation would encrease that Charge, which is already complained of as too great and grievous to be born.

The more Thanks is due to the publick Spirit of those Persons, who have cast in the Salt at the Fountain Head, to heal the *Waters* ^{2 Kings III.} that were *nought*, and the *Ground* that was *bar-* ^{21.} *ren*. I mean, the worthy *Citizens*, who begun this laudable Institution of *Charity-Schools*. Wherein the Children of both Sexes are now *redeemed* from the *Curse* they before lay under, are now put into a new World, another Course of Piety, Honesty, and Industry, wherein, by God's Blessing, they are now likely to be no longer a Stain and a Load upon their Birth-Place, but a Service, and an Ornament, and per-

perhaps, perpetual Benefactors to it. For I doubt not, but some one Charity-Scholar or other here present, will arise into a Figure in the World, and will have a grateful Soul, and he or she will remember and reward the Place of their Birth and Education.

IV. *Fourthly* and lastly, the Benefit of good Education does spread farther, and extend it self unto the whole Kingdom.

Of which, there needs no Proof: For a *Kingdom* is but a Collection of Families, and Parishes; and whatever is a domestick Comfort and a parochial Interest, must be a National and Universal Good: Whatever strengthens the Members, must needs invigorate the whole Body. But there are some peculiar Advantages to the Common-Wealth. All Government must subsist by Unity, Order, and Peace. Now if Children by timely Discipline, are made tractable and obedient to the Advice and Authority of their Parents and Teachers, they are then fitted to the Hands of other lawful Rulers; and the Church and the State will be as quiet as were the Family and the School. But if a perverse Will and selfish Humour, if Ignorance, Rudeness, Pride and Folly be suffered to take Root in our neglected Youth; then will the same Weeds appear in every other Age and Station, and the *twice Children* will be ever wanton, and uneasy,
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and rebellious, under the best of Governments. Worthy Citizens, We cannot be too populous, if we are not tumultuous : It is ill Education that maketh only a confused *Multitude* : There must be right Breeding to form the regular *Company* and *Society* of Mankind. So wild Nature maketh out a Wood, and a Forest; but Care and Cost must raise and preserve the decent *Walks* and *Plantations*. So Herbs and Flowers may have a faint Lustre in Fields and Hedges, but the inclosed *Gardens* only can improve them into Order and perfect Beauty. In like Manner, Schools and Appartments of Instruction are the Seminaries and the Nurseries of every Commonwealth, to dispose and prepare Mankind for publick Ornament and Service.

Hence to neglect the Education of Youth, is a sort of Plot against every Government, and may work a slow and sure Destruction to it. It was upon this View, that in one of the *Grecian* States, a Law is said to have obtained; That whatever Parents spent their Revenues upon their own Lusts, without allowing a competent Share for the suitable Breeding of their Children, their Estate so abused, was sequestred to the Government, and they were to bring up such neglected Children. Did it become me to say what Laws we want; I would presume to say, that we stand in need of such a *Law*, that if Parents will

will not bestow Education upon their Children, when they are able to do it, their Income (or at least a sufficient Part of it) should be assigned to the Publick, in Trust for Breeding up the innocent Children.

But even that Law would not reach to the destitute Families that cannot possibly afford to bestow this Blessing on their little ones. No Law but the Royal one of *Charity* can reach home to the Children of our poor and needy Brethren: And therefore to provide free Learning for these forsaken Souls, was always thought an Act of Generosity and Bounty. It was this Sense and Zeal that at the Beginning of our Reformation, inspir'd so many *English* Patriots to found *Grammar-Schools*; till their Charity this Way began to run into a sort of Excess, and almost bordered on the former Superstition of founding Cells and Monastries. The Intention of multiplying these Grammar-Schools was no doubt good and honourable; that such a Number of poorer Children might have Learning *gratis*, and an Opportunity be opened unto all the neighbouring Youth. But here lay the wrong Turn; The Masters of those Schools set up for *Greek* and *Latin* only; and so their Dispensation excluded one Sex altogether, and was indeed too high for the meaner Boys, born to the Spade and the Plough; if
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these were admitted, it gave them such an imperfect Taste of Learning, as when they were called out to Labours, and lower Trades, did but fill their Heads with Noise, and help to make them more vain and conceited. I must say, that for *Schools* of this nature, we have enough, and many of 'em excellently governed. If any worthy Persons be now inclined to Erect and Endow any School, it should be, in my Opinion, an *English School*, a Provision for Teaching the Children of the Poor their Mother Tongue, to know their Letters, to Spell, to Read, to Speak, to understand their Bibles and Prayer-Books; and so proceed to Write, and to cast Account, and to know the common Forms of daily Business in a Family, a Shop, and a Parish. *These* are the plain Accomplishments that (without a Syllable of learned Languages) would best become the Generality of People, and make them most useful in their Generation.

And therefore this is the very Method of our *Charity-Schools*, and renders our ordinary Children most fit for Services and proper Employments in the World. Ye are all sensible of it; if ye want a Boy or a Girl for a Servant or Apprentice, where shall a better Choice be made than out of a *Charity-School*? where a neat, and

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tractable, and virtuous, and religious little Scholar, is like young *Joseph*, a Blessing to the Family he comes into, and like *him*, in time of Need, may help to relieve a City, and to save a Kingdom.

If our Splendid *Hospital for Seamen* be within a little time adorn'd with an Apartment for Boys, to be bred early to Navigation, and those parts of the Mathematicks that are most useful to guide a Ship, and to survey the World: from whence shall a Supply of those Boys be taken, but from our *Charity-Schools*? where Lads may be pick'd out Sprightly, Hardy, Ingenious, and Good, fitter for the Service of their Queen and Country; fit to enlarge that Dominion of the Seas, which has been long our Right, and is now our eminent Glory.

To return, This good Influence of Knowledge and Instruction on the Happiness of a Kingdom, has made many of our Kings and Queens to be Nursing Fathers and Nursing Mothers to the Children of their People. Our pious King *Alfred*, to banish Paganism and Barbarity from this Island, erected Reading-Schools in several parts of his Dominions, and as we are told by a good Historian, He obliged all his Subjects of Ability to send their Children to those Schools: Nay, and by what we have of his own Royal Writings, we find that He came to
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this Resolution, that all Children should be sent to School, to learn to read *English*, and to write it, before they should be put to any Calling.

*Prefat. Al-
vredi in Col.
Camden. p.
28.*

And our Queens have been as Eminent in this Royal Wisdom and Goodness. Our Abbot

Ingulph tells of himself, that while a Boy, and

coming from School to Court, Queen *Edgith* would do him the Honour to hear him and examine him, and by her Maidens give him

*Hist. Ingulph.
Edit. Gale,
p. 62.*

pieces of Money to encourage his progress in Books and Learning. To come lower down.

In the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, by Her Royal Example and Countenance, there were more Schools and Colleges founded, than in any three or four Reigns whatever. There seems to be a

Reason in the nature of things, that when the more tender Sex ascends the Throne, all the Objects of Pity and Compassion are better consider'd and provided for. So will it be in this

Auspicious Reign: Several of the *Charity-Schools* have tasted of Her Majesty's Royal Bounty, and One of them has been already Incorporated by Her Royal Favour. Under the Influences of Her Wisdom and Goodness, We are a happy People! Glorious Success abroad and good Education at home shall (we trust in God) more and more flourish and abound.

Let me now be drawing toward a Conclusion, with this Inference from the whole:

“ That we ought all of us, in our several Stations,
 “ to promote and carry on this good Work of the
 “ Education of Children: Especially of the poor-
 “ er Sort; that we may join Hand in Hand, to
 “ become Planters and Builders in this noble
 “ Scheme of National Glory, this best Appear-
 “ ance of Humanity on Earth; Our Sons grow-
 “ ing up as the young Plants, and our Daughters be-
 “ ing as the polished Corners of a Palace or a Tem-
 “ ple.

There is no Collection now propos'd for this pious Use: We are only to go back and take all Opportunities of recommending the excellent Design by our Words and Actions, by our Advice and Perswasion, and above all, by our Example. The Arguments for it are too many to bear a mentioning at this Time. You hear them frequently urg'd in the Sermons and Lectures that are preach'd on behalf of these poor Children: And you see them abounding in the Word of God; especially in the 16th. of St. Matthew, where our dear Saviour, who chose to be himself an Infant, and would be represented as *increasing in Wisdom and Stature, and in Favour with God and Man*; He, blessed Jesus! called a little Child unto him, and set him in the midst of his Disciples; and said, *Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* *Whosoever therefore*

therefore shall humble himself as this little Child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven: And whoso shall receive one such little Child in my Name, receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a Milstone were hanged about his Neck, and that he were drowned in the Depth of the Sea. Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones: For I say unto you, that in Heaven their Angels do always behold the Face of my Father which is in Heaven. No Subject can be more moving, and no Words can be more pathetical upon it.

My Brethren, how has God been with us from our Youth up until now? And ever since we *hanged* on our Mother's Breasts, how have his Rod and his Staff been our Comfort and Support? What a mighty Argument of the good Providence of God is given in the Preservation of young Children! That poor Infants, who can neither help themselves, nor tell their Wants to others, should be supplied with all that is necessary for them: That *they* should run safely through so many Disorders and Diseases, that are incident to their infirm and tender Age: That *they* should be delivered from so many Accidents which hover continually round 'em; and should escape a thousand thousand Hazards, to which their own Weakness, and the Carelessness of others, does expose them Night and Day. I
say,

say, that poor Children should rub through such a Multitude of Mischances, and should hold up their helpless Heads in the midst of so many and great Dangers! Why, that an Infant should escape to be a grown Person, it is a Miracle of God's Mercy; and it could not be unless God covered them under the *Shadow* of his *Wings*, and hid them as the *Apple* of his *Eye*. Especially if we consider, that the Children of the Poor, who have least Care and Cost afforded to them; they generally thrive best, grow fastest, and live longest: while the Children of the Rich and the Noble, who have a nicer Tendance, and a more expensive Trouble bestow'd upon 'em, they commonly are more weakly and sickly, and come soonest to untimely Death; that in this Case it may appear, how *God is all in all*.

We may forget this Argument; but the ancient Fathers were so sensible of it, that they did believe and did assert, That God Almighty, the Father of the Fatherless, did set a Guardian Angel over every Child, to watch over and defend the little helpless, harmless Creature; and they grounded their Opinion on that Text of Scripture, which I lately cited, *St. Matthew 18. 10. Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in Heaven their Angels do always behold the Face of my Father which*

is in *Heaven*. And indeed, I think the Text does sufficiently imply, that these poor little ones are under the special Care and Protection of God, and of his *Ministring Spirits*, the *Holy Angels*.

This Divine Guardianship has lately appeared after a wonderful Manner, in the Education of poor Children, as well as in the common Protection of 'em. Many Persons here present have seen a late Book, entitled, *Pietas Hallensis* : or a *Publick Demonstration of the Footsteps of a Divine Being yet in the World, in an Historical Narration of the Orphan House, and other charitable Institutions at Glaucha near Hall in Saxony*. The Book was written by an eminent Professor of Divinity, the Pastor of that Town, and Director of the pious Foundations there ; And it seems to be written with a great Air of Integrity, cloathed in Modesty and Humility unaffected. What a surprizing Account is there given of that Charity-School, or Orphan-House, or Hospital for Children ! How mean was the Beginning of it, from a little Alms-Box fixed at the Minister's Study-Door ? What inconsiderable Mites were at first dropt into it ? How did the sorry Fund for some time hardly afford a few Books for the poor Children ? But how, by Degrees, did God open the Hearts and Hands of Neighbours and Strangers ? Till insensibly there

there was enough to provide first a Room for the Charity-School, then Materials for a House, then to lay the Foundations, and again, to enlarge 'em beyond the first Project, and at last, by seasonable and unexpected Supplies, to make up so fair and large a School and Hospital, and sort of University, as no Age hath before seen. Nay, and after all, to maintain it and improve it with no settled Endowment; but by contingent Presents and occasional Contributions only. I confess nothing in the World seems more Providential, or rather more miraculous.

Could we trace the obscurer Footsteps of our own *Charity-Schools*, the Finger of God would be as evident in them: That a private Person or two should project such a publick Design, at first thought impracticable: That it should be tried in one single Parish, as a Specimen of good Meaning only: That it should stand out the Dislike of some few, and the Despair of many others: That the difficult Example should spread it self to other Parishes, and be gaining Ground by little and little, till it took Possession of these Cities, and is hence propagated thro' all the Kingdom. That in the setting up of these Schools, some who unaccountably oppos'd them, were on the sudden reconcil'd to them: That some were made Instrumental in them almost without their own Knowledge: That there was
a Wheel

a Wheel within a Wheel, and the prime Agents were most concealed, to avoid Envy and Ostentation. I say, to think of the many Difficulties, and the overcoming of 'em with little Strength; *this* serves to assure us, that it is God's Work, and that it does and shall prosper in his Hands.

For this Charity has not been confin'd to our own Nation only; the good Example of *England* hath diffused it self through many other Protestant States and Kingdoms: By our Model the like Charity-Schools are setting up in *Holland, Switzerland, Prussia, Saxony*, and even in *Moscovy*; as if our good Works and our Arms were to spread their Glory together thro' all *Europe*.

Ten Years are hardly gone and past, since this Design of *Charity-Schools* was first laid; and behold the least of Seeds is already become a great *Tree*, and Multitudes of young Children do lodge under the *Branches* of it. Let me read, as has been the Custom of *Spital Sermons*,

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A True

A True Report of the Charity-Schools, and of the great Number of Poor Children therein Taught, and most of them Cloathed, and many of them put out in the World.

I. **W**ITHIN the Cities of *London* and *Westminster*, and within Ten Miles thereof, there be Sixty Four Charity-Schools, in which there be constantly maintained above Fifteen Hundred Boys, and near One Thousand Girls. For the Support of this Charity, there have been voluntary Subscriptions amounting to near *Three Thousand Pounds per Annum*; and the Collections made for this purpose at Sermons and Lectures preach'd for the Children, have been above *Thirteen Hundred Pounds per Annum*: And the stated Gifts and Legacies made to these respective Schools, from the beginning of them, have risen to above *Five Thousand Three Hundred Pounds*. By which means, out of the Number of Children so taught, and generally cloath'd, there have been at least *Six Hundred and Eighty Boys*, and *Two Hundred Girls*, put out Apprentices upon the common Fund; besides many of both Sexes that have been taken as Servants into sober honest Families, and several Boys admitted into Her Majesty's Service at Sea.

II. In other remoter Parts of this Kingdom, according to the Example borrowed from this City, there be about *One Hundred and Fourty Charity-Schools* of the like Nature, wherein about *Three Thousand Poor Children* have been freely taught, and a good part of them cloath'd, some wholly maintain'd, and several of them disposed well in the World. Most of this is done by the charitable Contribution of the Inhabitants. In one Town, the

the Subscriptions amount to above *Two Hundred Pounds per Annum*. Some small Country Schools of Charity are maintain'd at the sole Expence of private Persons. Other Schools have been built and encourag'd by Corporations and the Magistrates of them. In some Places, the Ministers teach the Children of the Poor to read *gratis*. Several Ministers pay for all the Children whom their poor Parents will send to School. Other Ministers have applied the Offertories or Collections at Communion to this charitable Purpose. And in some few Parishes, the more able Rectors of them have founded and perpetually endowed such *Charity-Schools*. And by Lay-People many considerable Gifts and Legacies have been bestow'd and bequeath'd to this pious Use: *Twenty Pounds per Annum* by one Gentlewoman; *Sixty Pounds per Annum* by another; and no less than *Six Thousand Pounds* to one Place by one particular Gentleman. In all these Schools the Children are taught Civility and good Manners, and Reading, and Catechizing: In some of them the Boys learn Writing and Arithmetick, and Navigation; and the Girls are taught to Knit, and Sew, and Mark, and Spin, and Card, and mend and make their own Cloaths.

III. In *Wales*, the Governour and Company of the *Mine-Adventurers of England* allow, within two several Counties, *Twenty Pounds per Annum* in each for *Charity-Schools*, to instruct the Children of the Miners and Workmen belonging to the said Company; and *Thirty Pounds* Yearly to a Minister to read Prayers, Preach, and catechize those Children. In another County, the Lord of the Mannor and Freeholders are Building a *Charity-School* on the Wast, and enclosing Part thereof, which is to be given for ever for Teaching the poor Children of that Lordship. And within other Counties some Numbers of Poor Children are taught at the Expence of Private Persons.

IV. In *Ireland* there is publish'd an Account of some *Charity-Schools* set up in the City of *Dublin*, in Imitation, as the Account expresseth it, of the *Charity-Schools* in *London*.

What a comfortable Account is this! at the Foot of it may be written, *The Pleasure of good Christians, and the Glory of this Age and Nation!* Shall the Papists now boast of their Piety of *Rome*, and Piety of *Paris*, because of some Hospitals and Houses call'd Religious? When this one City does far exceed them in a fundamental Charity, to which *Rome* and all its depending Countries are Strangers and very Enemies. They cannot erect Charity-Schools upon their Principle, that Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion. They must not acquaint the poor Children with the Scriptures, nor with any publick Form of Prayer in their Mother Tongue. This is a Charity which they call *Herésie*; but so we worship the God of our Fathers, and so we reach our Children.

A Method of Instruction that will be sure to arm another Generation against the Dangers of Popery. For how will these little ones, when grown up to Men and Women; How will they ever blind their own Eyes, and bow down their Necks to that dark Slavery? How will they part with their Bibles, when, like *Timothy*, from a Child they have been acquainted with the

Scri-

Scriptures? How will they stoop to Beads and *Latin* Charms, who have learned so many plain *Forms* of sound Words in their Catechisms, Psalms, and Prayer-Books? No! Every Charity-School is as it were a Fortrefs and a Frontier Garrison against Popery.

We remember the time, when in a Popish Reign, one Artifice of the Jesuits was, to open a Charity-Grammar-School in the *Savoy*; to inveigle and corrupt our poorer Youth. The best Expedient then thought of to countermine that Subtilty, was to open the like Charity-Schools St. Martin's Westminster. in the Neighbourhood, for a better Education in Learning and the Protestant Religion. All our present Charity-Schools, tho' not opened directly on the same View, yet will serve directly to the same Purpose: to be a Bulwark against Popery, and a Grace and Defence of our Reformation.

This good Work must be acknowledged to be an Immortal Honour to the last and present Reigns, which God of his good Wisdom connected together, as perhaps the only two happy Reigns for many Ages permitted to succeed one another. Many of our former Reigns have been distinguish'd for some peculiar Acts of doing Good. The Reign of *Henry VII.* for Uniting the Two Families, and likewise for Balancing the Nobility and Commonalty. The Reign of *Henry VIII.* for cast-
ing

ing off the Yoke of Papal Usurpation, and laying the Foundations of our Reformed Church; That of *Edward VI.* for carrying on the excellent Work: That of Queen *Elizabeth*, for completing of it: That of King *James I.* for bringing *Great Britain* under one Monarch, and keeping up a continual Peace--- The Reign of King *Charles II.* was not only adorned with a wonderful Restoration of Church and State, and Peace and Plenty; but was likewise bless'd with an Encrease of Hospitals and Schools, and I think, with the first Institution of Charity Feasts--- The last Reign was dignified with a signal Deliverance of these Nations from Popery and Slavery: And the present Reign seems to be reserv'd for higher and more distinguishing Favours of Heaven: For the reducing of *France*, for the restoring of *Spain*, for the preserving all *Europe*, for the Union of our two Kingdoms, and possibly, by degrees, for the greatest Blessing of all, the making us all of one Heart and one Mind. But now among other Glories of these two Reigns, this Foundation and Encrease of Charity-Schools and Work-Houses seem to me to shine forth, and to warm our Affections in a very extraordinary Manner.

It is apt indeed to be obscur'd by that Variety of other good Works, which yet really

adds Lustre to it: I mean, that Constellation of noble Designs; The forming Societies for Religion, and for Reformation of Manners, and for promoting Christian Knowledge, and for propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and for erecting of Parochial Libraries, and what has been the Queen's sole Prerogative of Charity, the Augmentation of the Livings of the poorer Clergy. These noble Acts, done at a Time when Taxes have been heavy, when Trade has been interrupted, when Murmurs and Factions have been very discouraging; *These noble Acts* breaking thro' all Opposition, will fill our Annals with the fair and sweet Memorial of them; and what is more our Concern, will with our Prayers help to draw down a Blessing on the present Age, and on Posterity: The prime Blessing of her Majesty's Health, and long Life, to give Protection to all her Allies, to gain Victory over all her Enemies, to restore the long broken Balance of *Europe*, and to settle Peace and Prosperity to this Church and Nation, that it may be well with *us*, and with our *Children* after us: Which God of his infinite Mercy grant to us and ours, thro' the Mediation of Jesus Christ, &c.

F I N I S.

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